

Spartan Gray Team: Deep Space

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Summary: "And what ever happened to Gray Team on a mission far outside the confines of UNSC space, now missing for over a year?" This is what happened to Spartan Gray Team, this is their story.

Spartan Gray Team: Deep Space

**\*\*Prologue:\*\***

Aboard cruiser \_the Athens\_  
><em>0125 hours, December 25th, 2550<em>.

Lord Hood sat at his desk reviewing the report on the all too familiar, one-sided skirmish between a covenant supercruiser, \_Arm of the Prophets\_, and two UNSC frigates, \_Integrity\_ and \_Desire's Flame\_. The \_Arm of the Prophets\_ had immediately engaged the two frigates, who were accompanied by a stealthed prowler, as they transitioned from slipspace to normal space. The battle (if it even could be called that) lasted three short minutes as the Covenant supercruiser obliterated the \_Integrity\_ and disabled \_Desire's Flame\_.

Normally a report like this wouldn't have even been brought to Hood's attention, but one extremely important detail changed that. When the two frigates transitioned to normal space \_Desire's Flame\_ was not able to enact the Cole Protocol, thus the Covenant super cruiser was able to board the frigate and gain access to all of it's navigation data. The nav data would allow the Covenant to travel to each of the UNSC's colony worlds, including Reach, and humanity's homeworld: Earth.

However, there was a fortunate side to the battle, a small fortune, albeit one that gave the UNSC a slim amount of hope. The prowler that had accompanied the frigates was able to get close enough that it was able to launch a tiny homing device that attached itself to the Covenant supercruiser, allowing the prowler to track the supercruiser

wherever it went.

>Lord Hood finished the report; there was only one thing that the UNSC could do: they would send their fastest ship after the super carrier, and, they would send their greatest soldiers with it, <strong>Spartans</strong>.

Hood stood and walked away from his desk. He was very agitated, and in all reality, who wouldn't be? The Covenant had data that would allow them to glass every damn planet the UNSC had left. He didn't have very much of a choice in his position, he had to send a ship after the Covenant supercruiser, or humanity was doomed.

He tapped a button on his personal computer. His personal "smart" AI, Leonidas popped up onto the AI pad that was placed next to the computer. His figure was that of a Spartan, the Greek heroes from nearly three millennia ago.

"Ah, Lord Hood, how do you fare today?" the AI asked cheerfully.

"Unfortunately, not well Leonidas," Hood responded. "I need your assistance now, time is of the essence."

"What can i do for you Lord Hood?" Leonidas said suddenly serious.

"Find me the fastest combat-ready ship in system," Hood told him. "and find any Spartans in system."

"Yes Lord Hood." the AI paused for three seconds. "Destroyer class battleship located, ironically named the \_Constantinople\_. Also there are three Spartans in system, designated Spartan Gray Team. They just got back from a mission in the Chi Ceti system."

"Very well," Hood paused thinking. Spartan Gray Team was one of the best deep space infiltration teams in the entire Spartan corp. If anybody could get the job done, \_they could\_. "Tell \_Constaninople's\_captain to get the ship ready for slipspace travel and report to Cairo Station. Also have Spartan Gray team's senior officer to report to me."

"Yes sir," Leonidas said. Several seconds later he told Hood, "Spartan 006 is on his way and \_Constantinople\_ is heading towards Cairo Station now."

"Thank you Leonidas," Hood said as he powered down his computer, "that will be all."

"Yes Lord Hood."

Lord Hood thought to himself. Spartan 006, Jai, one of the best Spartans he knew. His team would get the job done, he could stop that supercruiser.

**\*\*Chapter 1: to save a galaxy\*\***

Aboard tramp freighter \_Petya\_  
><em>0125 hours; December 25th, 2550</em>

Jai laid in his large bed that had been welded into Spartan Gray

team's freighter, \_Petya\_, that they had been given so many years ago by Admiral Cole. He couldn't sleep, hadn't been able to sleep for the last several days. Rather than sleep he thought over the details of their last mission.

In their last deep space mission Spartan Gray team had been observing the Covenant planet simply designated Beta 402, looking for the coming and goings of any member of the Covenant hierarchy. They hadn't seen any sort of hierarch. Instead, after one year of dully observing the Covenant file in and out of the system, Spartan Gray team received a slipspace com probe ordering them to cause as much havoc in Beta 402 as they could, then haul ass back to earth (after enacting the Cole Protocol of course).

The Spartans had been... well... relieved. Good as they were at infiltration and observation, they were better in combat. None of them doubted that much. So, Gray Team brought out, as the saying goes, "the big guns." They cut down the eight HAVOC nuclear warheads and unleashed them on the most populated centers in Beta 402, and decimated the two Covenant ships that sat in orbit. They then followed the Cole Protocol and completed several random slipspace jumps until they got back to Reach for refueling, and then back to Earth.

Gray Team had been home from that mission ever since then, which was a good five days. A\_GREAT\_ five days. Rightly so, because Jai, Adriana, and Mike all needed some R&R, and bad. They'd been exhausted, even with their Spartan training. Apparently, the admiralty had seen that and decided it would be profitable for Gray team to get some rest and relaxation. It was good with Jai, he\_knew\_ they deserved it.

A beep came in over the comm. \_Who would contact us at this time of night?\_ Jai thought irritated. \_Whoever it was, it had to be very important.\_

Jai picked up the comm. "Spartan 006 reporting," he spoke into the comm.

Lucky for Jai, Adriana and Mike didn't have the same quarters as him, else they would have awakened as irritated as he was at that moment. But that was Jai's personality; he knew it, and he wouldn't change. That's just who he was.

"\_Spartan 006, this is Leonidas, personal AI to Lord Hood. He would like you to report him on the Athens\_, " Leonidas informed him.

Jai almost laughed at the irony of it: Leonidas on the Athens? But then his thought became more serious. "Wait. Did you say Lord Hood?" Jai queried incredulously.

"\_Affirmative\_, " Leonidas confirmed.

Quickly Jai regained his wits. "I'm on my way," he affirmed.

"\_Very good sir\_, " Leonidas said as he shut off the comm.

Jai hurriedly made his way out of his quarters onto the bridge of the tiny frigate. His gray colored MJOLNIR mark IV armor sat on a stand with both Adriana and Mike's armor that were at a machine that fitted

the spartans' armor on them. Jai strode over to the machine, pressed a few buttons, and began the armor fitting process. Two minutes later Jai was encrusted in his second skin, save his helmet, and was ready to go. He grabbed his helmet, walked over to the cockpit, and set a course to dock with the Athens.

Stars passed by quickly as Petya closed in on the Athens. The small freighter came within a kilometer of the cruiser and Jai lessened the thrust. Mike and Adriana both chose that time to make their ways onto the bridge.

"What's the deal Jai?" Adriana asked, with her hands on her hips.

"Just got orders from Lord Hood's AI-" Jai began.

"Leonidas," Mike interrupted. His mind was an enigma to Jai; he had no idea how Mike's mind worked-he could remember so much for so long.

"Yeah," Jai confirmed. "Anyways, I've received orders to dock with the Athens and speak with Lord Hood himself."

Mike looked into space thoughtfully. "Gotta be something of the utmost importance," he speculated.

"Seems like it," Adriana agreed.

"Let me take the controls," Mike said. He was the pilot of the three. When Mike was only six years old he had hijacked a pelican from watching the pilot who brought the spartans in for to the assembly hall when they met Halsey for the first time. Then, after he hijacked the pelican, he blew it up.

An enigma indeed, thought Jai as he moved away from the controls and gave them up to Mike.

"Incoming comm transmission from the Athens," Mike informed them. "Patching it through."

"Petya, you're scheduled to dock in our landing bay. Please send confirmation code," came a woman's voice.

Mike sent the normal confirmation code for docking in a ship's landing bay. A moment passed by.

"Confirmation code received. Please dock Petya."

Mike nodded to himself and masterfully maneuvered the tramp freighter into the docking bay of the enormous cruiser. He was an impressive pilot, no doubt about it. He maneuvered the ship to a platform where a lot of men and women were gathered, waving them in. The freighter landed and Jai was about to leave the cockpit when he turned back to his teammates.

"I'll be back," he began, "within the hour."

Mike and Adriana nodded and Jai traveled to the back of the freighter as one of the many exit hatches opened up. He strode out, towering over the UNSC personnel that worked hard on their many jobs. Many of

the personnel gaped at the two meter tall Spartan. Jai smiled inside of his mirrored visor; he'd always gotten a kick out of having men and women of every kind gape at him. But he also got a bit irritated by it, some people needed to hide their expressions and be a little more discrete.

Jai began to pick his way to Admiral Hood's quarters. He strode to an elevator and pressed the "ascend" button and waited. Several men and women stood at a distance to his right as they also waited for the elevator. The elevator descended and a voice spoke as it reached their deck. "\_Docking bay\_." Jai entered and the men and women who gawked at him cautiously entered the elevator. They each pressed the button for their deck; Jai moved his hand to the buttons and, like instinct, pressed the button for the deck Lord Hood's quarters were located on. It \_was\_ instinct, as he'd been to the captain's quarters (the captain's quarters were located at the same place as the an Admiral's) more times than he could count.

After several minutes of stopping on eight different decks the elevator stopped at the very top deck of the enormous cruiser. Jai breathed out a breath of relief as the doors opened. The impatient Spartan exited the elevator and easily made his way through the many bulkheads, the doors, and observational windows until he reached the door to Lord Hood's quarters.

Outside Hood's quarters sat ten highly trained marines. They stood straight, assault rifles at the ready as Jai approached them. If they were intimidated by his appearance, they didn't show it. One of the marines, with the name Checketts stenciled on his armor strode up to Jai, assault rifle in hand, and held up a hand to stop him. As if the marine could stop him. Nevertheless, Jai stopped.

"Name," Checketts demanded of him.

"Jai, Spartan 006," Jai told him confidently.

Checketts looked down at a datapad. "You're clear," he informed Jai. Jai nodded and the doors swept apart at the press of a button.

As soon as Jai strode on deck and saw Lord Hood he saluted. "Sir, Spartan 006 reporting for duty sir!"

Lord Hood looked up at him from a desk with scattered reports piled atop it. The man had a square face with dark bags under his eyes and old graying hair. But in his eyes Jai could see there was a very sharp man, as it should be. He stood and saluted the Spartan back. Then he did something rare when meeting with a spartan, he help out a hand. Jai carefully took hold of Lord Hood's hand. They shook for a moment then Hood motioned for Jai to sit.

"Sir, i would prefer to stand if you don't mind," Jai informed him. Lord Hood nodded in acceptance.

"Well Spartan," began the Admiral, "I might as well get you up to date." With that the Admiral dove right into the situation, explaining every detail to Jai.

Jai let out a breath. This was big, no, \_monutmental\_. Should the nav data get to the covenant hierarchy, whoever they may be, then humanity would truly be doomed.

"Sir, permission to go after that ship?" Jai asked bravely.

Lord Hood grinned. Every spartan was brave, always wanting to do the impossible.

"That's just what i wanted you to say. But, you'll need a faster ship; that freighter is just too old, and too slow," said Lord Hood.

"Sir, if i may, that old girl has lived through a lot of missions," Jai informed him defensively.

Lord Hood held up his hands for peace. "Be that as it may, your team has never been on a mission like this spartan," he said shaking his head slightly. "However, we do have the fastest ship in system ready for you."

Jai nodded and said, "Sir, we'll get the job done." This was the kind of mission Jai lived for, one that would bring the fight to the Covenant, and they would get justice.

"Good," said Lord Hood as he grabbed pulled out a chip from his computer. "Take this, it's my AI Leonidas, you'll need him."

"Sir, are you certain?" Jai asked, taking the chip uncertainly.

Lord Hood nodded. "Yes, he's the second most brilliant AI ever created. The first is... being used. Either way, report to the destroyer the Constantinople. You'll be leaving at 0800 hours. Dismissed," Lord Hood ordered.

Jai nodded curtly, dropping the small chip carefully in a pouch. He began towards the door when he turned back to the Admiral, suddenly remembering something. "Oh and sir, merry Christmas."

The Admiral smiled. "And to you Spartan."

With that Jai left and found his way back to his freighter. It had been half an hour since he'd left Petya, so neither Adriana or Mike was very worried about Jai.

Jai entered the cockpit. Both Mike and Adriana had their armor on and were talking casually. They stopped as Jai entered and looked at him expectantly. He explained the whole story and the mission. Everything.

"Well," said Adriana, "let's get our asses in gear."

"I agree," said Mike.

"Alright," said Jai, "then we're in agreement. Get us out of this docking bay and plot a course to dock with Constantinople. They'll be expecting us."

"You got it," said Mike. He maneuvered the ship out of the docking bay and plotted a course to Constantinople.

**\*\*Chapter 2: Upgrades? Oh boy!\*\***

\_Aboard the destroyer Constantinople\_  
>0630 hours; December 25th, 2550.<br>1 hour 30 minutes to  
departure

Captain Roderick J. Brown sat at the tiny desk in his personal quarters reading the encrypted file on the mission ahead. Apparently, they were chasing down a covenant supercruiser through slipspace to coordinates deep in the heart of covenant space to stop them from transferring stolen nav data to the covenant hierarchy. A covenant \_super carrier\_? Son of a bltch, thought Roderick, how were they supposed to stop a super carrier when they themselves only had a destroyer? A destroyer was not even 1/3rd the size of a super cruiser. They were on a suicide mission.

At that moment the doors to Roderick's quarters opened up revealing a figure in gray armor, standing nearly two meters tall. \_It\_ approached Roderick, who immediately recognized him as a Spartan.

"Sir," the Spartan, who was assuredly a man, said. "You wanted to see me?"

The captain stood and saluted back, in awe of the massive man. He immediately regained his composure and stood much straighter than he originally had been.

"Yes," came the response. "Yes, I did. Spartan... 006," Roderick began looking at 006's file, "I assume, you know what this mission is all about?"

"Taking out the Covenant super cruiser that holds the nav data before it can reach a hierarch," 006 confirmed.

"Good, good." He paused once again and was about to speak again when 006 reached into a pouch and pulled out a small data chip with a glowing tiny sphere in the middle of it. An AI chip.

"Sir, Lord Hood's AI, Leonidas."

Roderick stroked his clean shaven face. "Lord Hood you say?" he asked and the Spartan nodded. "I'll have to thank the Lord Admiral for that before leaving, we've been without an AI for months," he told 006.

The Spartan said nothing, just looked at him expectantly. \_He sure ain't no chatty Cathy\_, thought Roderick. He decided, though, that he would not continue to waste the Spartan's time with any more of his useless information.

"As i was going to say," began the Captain as he pocketed the AI chip, "before we leave on this mission, ONI wanted to install some experimental technologies and upgrades into your armor... or something like that. Anyways you and your team report to the armory on deck D-14 for the installation of those parts."

"Yes sir, said the Spartan obediently.

"I'll accompany you to the elevator spartan."

"If I may sir, there's no need for that. I found my way here, i can

find my way back." 006 said.

It was true the captain didn't really need to accompany him, but Roderick was heading to the bridge. He had a job to do.

"Nonsense Spartan, i'm already on my way to the bridge. After all, I am the captain," Roderick said jokingly.

The Spartan only nodded and the two left the room.

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Jai entered the Petya for what felt like the hundredth time that day. He had been filtering in and out of the ship since Gray team had entered they docking bay. He'd been gathering supplies, trading intelligence (which was very little), and more recently speaking with the Captain.

The Captain had given him orders to get his team to the armory for some sort of upgrade to their armor systems, and Jai intended to follow that order. Hopefully it would give his team the upper hand in this fight.

When Jai entered the bridge of the small freighter he found his teammates hard at work. Adriana was was busy using an arc welder to weld support braces to the interior of the ship and armor plates to the exterior. Mike was busy reviewing a datapad and performing calculations on the ship's computer.

For some reason unbeknownst to Jai, Mike liked to calculate their odds of survival before a mission. Jai had a series of theories on this, but he figured that Mike liked to know the odds, just so he could beat them. After all that was what spartans were all about.

Mike soon noticed Jai and cleared his throat. "Been calculating the odds her Jai-

"-Don't want to know," Jai interrupted.

Adriana chuckled behind her visor.

"ONI's got something for us in the armory," Jai explained, stating what he originally was there to say.

Adriana looked at him quizzically. "ONI..." she muttered. Finally she deduced what it could be. "New armor parts?" Enthusiasm dripped from her words.

Jai nodded once.

"That's what I'm talking about," Mike exclaimed. "Let's go!"

"Sure, let's go," Jai said.

"Hold on a sec. Gotta finish installing this support brace," Adriana explained.

She hefted the arc welder like it was nothing and began to install the brace in the ship. Sparks flew back at her, dancing around and



off of her armor. The internal temperature of her MJOLNIR armor rose by fifteen degrees and she began to sweat. She finished the welding and set the arc welder on the ground carefully.

"Okay, i'm ready. Lead the way Jai," she directed.

Nodding, Jai led the way to the elevator and pressed the button for the armory: deck D-14. At the hum of the elevator Jai closed his eyes, something he didn't do often. He spread his legs to shoulder length and grasped his hands together behind the back.

It felt like seconds before the elevator beeped, announced they were at deck D-14, and opened its doors. The three spartans took their leave of the elevator and walked through halls until they found the armory.

Marines crowded the passageways of the armory but dumb-struck the dumbstruck men and women made a path when the enormous spartans entered. Jai inspected the large, long room. Submachine guns, rifles, pistols, and their ammunition sat upon sloped platforms with borders at the bottom and sides. SPNKR launchers and grenade launchers were placed in cabinets along with their munitions also.

At the end of the armory sat three secured titanium grade-B lockers with the name ONI stenciled upon them. They were obviously meant for the Spartans. Two men dressed in black and gray armor that looked similar to MJOLNIR armor stood by the lockers speaking to each other in hushed tones. Jai listened in on their conversation for a second.

"... I hate those damn-" the man glanced at the Spartan and focused on them. He nudged his buddy and motioned at them. "Spartans," he muttered.

With his bio-genetically enhanced eyes Jai saw the designation ONI printed on the their chests. He opened a secure comm channel to his spartan teammates.

"Spooks," he informed them. Mike nodded subtly and Adriana barely looked his way. Jai hated spooks, he did not trust them whatsoever. If he couldn't trust them, he couldn't work with them on a team, that was Jai's philosophy.

"Welcome Jai, Adriana, Mike. We've got some very exciting news for you three," Said one of the spooks, the tall lanky one. The other spook, the short one, remained silent, deciding to defer to his partner.

"What are we here for...?" Jai trailed off, not knowing the tall man's name.

"Sean. You're here for the armor upgrades," Sean said.

Jai rolled his eyes behind his visor.

"What kind of upgrades?" Mike asked, irritation subtly creeping into his voice.

"You three Spartans have encountered Sangheili before yes?" asked Sean.

Jai gritted his teeth and said, "Of course we have."

"Then you should know that they use a shield technology that protects them from a certain amount of damage and then collapse."

"So you're saying that we're being given covenant shield technology?" Mike assumed.

The short one nodded and spoke for the first time. "It's an experimental technology that has been under research for years by the research teams at the Office of Naval Intelligence. Now, it's time for you spartans to test it in extended use."

The spartans looked at each other approvingly. Jai had been right, this could be something that could change the war.

"However," said the short spook, "we will need you to leave your armor here for the duration of the slipspace jump, as you will be in cryo."

"How long is the slipspace jump going to take?" Adriana asked suddenly.

The man didn't talk for a moment, probably checking his HUD for the information.

"Three weeks," Sean said with a sure air in his words.

"Three weeks?" Mike asked incredulously. "How's that even possible?"

Sean looked at the shorter ONI agent, who nodded back. Perhaps he was the senior officer of the two? Not that it mattered to Jai.

"Section three has designed a more efficient Shaw-Fujikawa drive that can travel much faster through slipspace than the earlier models. We installed one on Constantinople," he informed them.

"Then why aren't there more of these slipspace drives on other ships within the fleet?" Mike asked intrigued. He had his arms folded and was listening intently.

"These improved drives cost much more than they did, and could only be installed onto a select few ships. This one included," said Sean.

"So that must-" Mike began.

Jai interrupted. "Look, we've got stuff to do before the slipspace jump..."

Sean nodded slowly. "Affirmative. As soon as you three finish those tasks, get those suits to us, and we'll get those upgrades installed."

Jai nodded.

"One more thing, we're installing several components of the mark V into your armor systems."

"Affirmative. We'll be back by 0800."

Sean nodded and began talking with the other ONI agent once more.

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0100 hours later  
>0000 hours to departure.<br>Slipspace drive powering up,  
>jump imminent.<p>

The Spartans, minus their armor stepped into the cryogenics lab. They wore military fatigues custom designed for them alone.

The cryogenics director of oversight sat in the overwatch. He spoke in the intercom, directing them on the procedure of cryogenic sleep.

The two ONI agents sat outside of the spartans' cryo pods.

"Alright Spartans, here's the deal," Sean began. "You will be unthawed one hour before we arrive at the destination. Your armor will be in the ONI lockers in the armory. Here's the code: delta, alpha, delta, xray, lima, omega," he told them.

"Sir," said Jai, "we'll see you on the other side Sean."

The ONI agent smiled deviously inside his helmet and nodded.

"Yes," he said, "you will."

**\*\*Chapter 3: a Minor Situation\*\***

Aboard \_Constantinople\_  
>1536 hours; January 8th, 2551<p>

"Spartans, please wake up!" came a pleading, desperate voice through the speakers in Jai's cryo pod. Jai licked his lips, gagging and coughing on the "nutritious" goop that had formed in his lungs during his last two weeks in cryo.

"If you can hear me," came the pleading voice, "I'm going to open up your cryo pods. We've got a situation on our hands."

The cryo pod hissed as it pressurized opened up. Jai, Adriana and Mike simultaneously jumped out of their cryo pods and glanced at each other. The cryogenics lab was devoid of life save the Spartans and the crewman standing behind the glass of the elevated cryo-lab-operator room.

"Thank the almighty!" the crewman lit up with joy and relief. He opened a hatch on the floor and slid down the ladder to the Spartans. "You don't know how relieved i am to see you Spartans awake."

"What's the problem crewman?" asked Jai in a commanding tone.

"Sir," began the crewman, his eyes flickering from side to side in some sort of nervous tick, "as soon as we dropped out of slipspace we

were engaged by the Covenant supercruiser, the only Covenant ship in orbit around some sort of planet we've arrived at."

Jai looked at Mike, whose face was scrunched up in confusion. "Wait, you mean we've already exited slipspace before we were taken out of cryo?" asked Mike.

The crewman gulped loudly, showing fear on his face. Jai was sympathetic to his fear, as the crewman was talking with three two-meter-tall Spartans and they were under attack by the Covenant. But Jai didn't have time to show that he was sympathizing, he needed to get information.

" Well... uh... sirs," said the man nervously, "we were given specific orders to not thaw you. They said there was no need so we, I followed those orders. But, believe me sirs, if I had known this was going to happen, well I would have thawed you out in a heartbeat."

The three Spartans looked at each other, each of them thinking the same thing. Why would this crewman receive orders to keep the Spartans in cryo?

"Who did the order come from?" asked Jai, his deep voice commanding the crewman to give him his answer.

The crewman flinched. "Uh... ONI. Sir."

ONI? thought Jai confused. Why would ONI order him to keep them in cryo? Something didn't add up.

He walked a few meters away from the crewman, motioning his Spartans. He spoke in a hushed tone. "Something doesn't add up. Why would ONI do this? It doesn't make sense."

"Jai," said Adriana calmly, "I don't understand it either. But, if we don't formulate some sort of plan with the captain, there won't be any time to find any answers."

Mike nodded in agreement to her statement. Jai rubbed his chin and nodded. "You're right, we need to get in contact with the bridge and make a plan. First though we need to get to our MJOLNIR armor and get armed."

"Sound like a good plan," said Adriana. "Let's get going."

The Spartans turned around and strode towards the door.

"Hold on. I'm coming with you," the crewman told them.

"I don't think so," Jai told him. "You'd just slow us down."

The crewman, gaining confidence, shook his head. "You don't have the codes to that door, I do."

Jai looked to Adriana who checked the keypad on the door. She nodded, confirming what the crewman had said.

"Fine. Try to keep up," Jai growled.

The crewman nodded triumphantly and accessed the keypad. He input the codes and the door split in the middle. It slightly opened and jammed.

"No!" screamed the crewman as he smashed his fist into the keypad.

"Mike," said Jai motioning with his head towards the door. Mike understood and grabbed onto one side of the jammed door. Jai shouldered his way past the crewman and grabbed onto the other side of the door.

"On my mark," Jai said aloud. "Three... two... one. Mark!" The two Spartans pulled the doors with all their might. Metal creaked and groaned, moving in directions it was not meant to move in. Jai's bio-enhanced muscles expanded, a vein bulging from the brown skin on his forehead. Mike's muscles bulged just the same, veins popping out from his dark brown arms. The door screeched one last time, it's final scream before it opened enough for the Spartans.

"Let's move Spartans. Adriana take point, i'll take the rear," Jai said in his commanding tone. Adriana rolled her eyes as she walked past him and out the door. She didn't really listen to Jai's commands, and he had given up trying to command her. Truthfully, there wasn't much of a commander of the group, the three understood each other and did what was necessary.

Mike and the crewman followed suit and Jai took the rear. The four of them jogged down the hall. A roaring fire blocked their path, but Adriana ducked under a grate and into a nearby passageway. They jumped over a pair of pipes and turned right into a small corridor. Twenty five meters later they had made it to the armory.

A voice came in over the shipwide comm. "All UNSC personnel to battle stations. Boarders inbound. I repeat All UNSC personnel report to battle stations."

Suddenly the crewman snapped, huge tears welled up in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. He sat down in the fetal position in the corner of the armory. "We're dead, we're all dead!" His eyes were wide with fear.

Jai knelt down on one knee in front of the crewman. He hesitantly put a hand on his shoulder; Jai wasn't good at this kind of stuff.

"What's your name crewman?" asked Jai in a soft voice.

The crewman looked at him with light green eyes. "My name is... Scotty... Scotty Brein." He still had that look in his eyes, the one of fear.

"Look Scotty, we've got to get out of here. We can still make it, those Covenant Bastards haven't been able to take us Spartans out in..." Jai thought, "gotta be a hundred or so engagements. Stick with us, and you'll make it out just fine."

Scotty looked worried, and he shook his head violently. "No, no way. Nobody's gonna make it out of here alive. Not even you."

Jai stood up and looked at the other two Spartans with a sorrowful expression, shaking his head. He had said he didn't want Scotty with them a few minutes ago, and that had been true, but he would rather have the man with them than leave him to die. What could he do though?

"He's gone," Jai told them in a whisper.

Mike nodded his head regretfully. Adriana shook her head.

"No man left behind Jai," she said. "Don't you remember the Rubble?"

"As I recall, that we were coerced into saving those innies by a rampant AI."

"The point remains the same Jai," Mike pitched in. He was normally the silent one. "We're supposed to be saving humanity, not letting them die."

The two men stared at each other, fighting a silent battle. Jai submitted. "Adriana, since it was your idea, pick him up after we don our armor."

Adriana grinned at Mike, who grinned back. They'd won the battle against Jai.

The three Spartans hurried to the other end of the armory and put in the passcodes to their lockers. The lockers popped open revealing their MJOLNIR armor. Each of the Spartans also found another object in their lockers. For Mike, there were four cut down FENRIS nuclear warheads. For Adriana there was some sort of gadget, a sphere the size of a tennis ball. Jai had a three duffle bags and a rectangular device that could be attached to the forearm of her MJOLNIR armor. He recognized it as a TACPAD: a pad that could be linked with satellites and could hold an AI in it.

\_Duffle bags\_? Jai asked himself. Then he realized what he could do with them. "Mike, after you get suited up I want you to fill two of those bags with guns and ammunition. As for the third bag, I want you to put those FENRIS nukes in that bag."

Mike nodded once again. The three Spartans then proceeded to don their armor. Three minutes later they finished encasing themselves in their armor. Mike shoved the cut down nukes in the bag and began to gather up guns and ammo. Jai equipped his TACPAD and began to help Mike pack up the guns and ammo.

"Arm yourselves Spartans, we'll need it them." Jai grabbed a M90 Shotgun and two M6D pistols as secondary weapons he also grabbed a combat knife and attached it to his chest armor. Mike grabbed a BR55HB SR Battle Rifle and looked through the scope checking it out, he made some minor adjustments and attached it to the back of his armor; he then grabbed a MA37 Assault Rifle. Adriana grabbed an SRS99 sniper rifle checked the scope and attached it to her back. She grabbed an MA5K carbine holding it in her hands.

The three of them looked at each other and Jai established a direct comm with the other two. "Next objective?" asked Mike.

"Like I said, we need to contact the bridge," Jai began. He looked at his TACPAD. "And i have just they way."

Jai tapped a few buttons at the TACPAD and heard his comm click. He patched the comm into Mik and Andria's comm's too.

"006, what can I do for you?" asked Leonidas. Jai smiled to himself: \_Ah the formality of AIs\_.

"Connect me to the Captain, Leonidas," Jai requested. He folded his arms as his teammates waited for him patiently.

"No can do. The captain is a bit busy at the moment."

"Sir, what are our orders?" Jai inquired strongly.

"Report to the bridge ASAP, the Captain has something for you."

"Yes sir," said the Spartan. The sir was unnecessary for an AI, but Jai had learned to respect AIs, they could make your life hell pretty quick.

"You heard her Spartans we've got to get to the bridge, STAT," Jai told them. Two green acknowledgement lights lit up on his heads-up-display.

The Spartans moved over to the other end of the armory; Jai glanced at the broken man, rocking from side to side. It was pitiful. "Pick him up Adriana."

She nodded holding her Ma5k in one hand, she knelt down in front of Scotty, the broken crewman. His eyes grew wide as she approached him. "No. Boarding parties are gonna kill us. No escape for us." He became hysterical. "We're all dead!"

Adriana looked pleadingly at Jai who nodded his head in approval of her next move. She hit the man in the fast just hard enough to knock him out, but not hard enough to do him brain damage. Although he'd have one hell of a headache in the morning.

Scotty's eyes rolled back in his head and he slumped over. Blood trickled out of his nose. Adriana picked him up like a bag of potatoes (which were still quite common even in the twenty sixth century) and hefted him onto her shoulder.

"Man that guy was getting annoying!" exclaimed Adriana. Mike chuckled, as did Jai.

"Let's get moving," Jai suggested, suddenly remembering the mission.

Mike and Adriana's acknowledgement lights lit up again on Jai's HUD.

The three of them hurried outside the armory and were hurled against the wall by an explosion far off in the ship. Apparently the borders had landed.

"Borders," muttered Mike, saying what they were all thinking.

"Let's go Spartans. Double time," Jai told them.

The three of them hurried down hallways and corridors, checking for Covenant borders along the way. They reached the elevator finding no trouble whatsoever. Jai was about to press the button to "call" the elevator when the doors parted suddenly. In front of the Spartans sat a squad of startled Sangheili, or Elites. "\_Demon\_" spat one of them.

The Spartans raised their guns first and fired on the Elites. The startled Elites raised their plasma weapons and roared, just as the first wall of bullets smashed into their shields. One bullet lodged in the brain of an Elite Minor who dropped to the ground immediately.

Shields down, one of the Elites roared and returned fire at Jai. Jai dove for cover, momentarily forgetting that he had he had shields. It was at that moment Jai noticed a thin bar at the top of his HUD, he guessed it stated the strength of his shields. Jai grabbed a grenade from his belt, pulled the prim priming it. He lobbed it at the Elites. They looked at it, almost in horror, as it sailed at them and exploded. None of them survived.

Jai examined the elevator and the hallway. Blood and bits of bones had splattered the walls, the floor, everywhere. "Police those weapons Mike, we may need them in the not-to-distant future," Jai told him.

"Got it," came the reply.

Mike grabbed Plasma rifles, plasma grenades, and plasma pistols and stuffed them in the duffle bags. Adriana and Jai removed the remains of the Elites from the elevator. They stepped into the elevator, Mike joined them shortly after. Jai pressed the button for the very top deck, where the bridge was located, and waited readily as the elevator ascended.

Adriana viewed the scene in the elevator.

"Man, this would make great wallpaper for your room in the freighter Jai," said Adriana jokingly.

Jai smiled inside of his visor, chuckling.

"Well, let's hope it doesn't come to Elites invading old \_Petya\_," Jai cracked back.

The atmosphere was relatively light for the Spartans just having killed a squad of Elites.

The elevator binged announcing once again that they had arrived on the top deck. The Spartans stepped out, expecting trouble. There was nothing, just a barren hallway, completely devoid of life. There was a click in Jai's mic; someone was pinging him. He tapped the TACPAD and heard a voice enter his comm.

"006, the Covenant are trying to breach the bridge," Leonidas told him in an urgent tone. "We're not going to last much longer. Get to the bridge, double time!"



"We're on our way sir. Hold on," Jai replied. The comm disconnected, either because the bridge had been breached and the crew was being slaughtered, or because Leonidas had simply disconnected the link. Jai hoped it was the latter.

"Spartans we've got to get to the bridge now!" Jai commanded. This time his teammates listened.

The three of them began to sprint, pushing themselves to their limits. They ran down hallways, evading any sort of obstacle, ducking into corridors and even using maintenance passageways. Eventually, they got to the point where Jai could smell a an odor that reeked of burnt metal and could hear excited barking.

"We're about at the bridge," Jai informed the other Spartans. Mike and Jai waited as Adriana gently set down Scotty in a maintenance passageway, making sure it was a safe area.

"Ready," said Adriana.

Jai poked his head around the corner of an intersection and saw a mass of Covenant warriors. He counted twenty two of them; five Elites, thirteen Unggoy or Grunts, and four Kig-Yar, also known as Jackals.

"Okay. We've got twenty two hostiles. We need a way to take them out, and fast. Any suggestions?" he asked them.

Mike pulled out three grenades from the duffle bag. "I figure we could shake things up a little. Go in shooting," he said. Jai couldn't see behind Mike's visor but he was 100% sure that he was grinning widely.

Jai was about to tell him to do it when Adriana spoke up. "What about this?" she asked holding up the chrome, tennis ball size gadget she had been given with her MJOLNIR armor.

"What does it even do?" asked Jai. Adriana shook her head.

"I'm not quite sure." She looked at Mike. "I believe this is your area of expertise."

Mike took the sphere and examined it. It only took him a couple of seconds to process it. "Looks like some sort of shield disruptor, I guess. I've seen one of these before, but only once. It looks like ONIs been getting some stuff done."

Jai approved, as long as it worked. "Alright Adriana, prime it, and chuck it."

Adriana nodded. She probably liked the plan, she was insane.

Adriana pressed a tiny button and threw it immediately. She was lucky she threw it rather than cook it like a grenade. Two seconds after it left her hands it let out some sort of pulse that hit the Elites and Jackals, disrupting their shields for a few seconds.

"Fire!" said Jai.

Jai aimed his shotgun at the nearest Covenant bastard, an Elite, and

pulled the trigger. Blood splattered its startled teammates. Adriana let loose a hail of armor piercing rounds from her MA5K that cut down four Grunts and a Jackal. The remaining Covenant turned to face them and opened fire.

An Elite major snarled and fired at Jai. Plasma bolts splashed over his shields, draining his shield to three fourths strength. Mike and Adriana laid down covering fire with their automatic weapons as Jai took cover behind a bulkhead. Needler rounds crashed into his cover and exploding, chipping away at the metal bulkhead. Not wanting to waste the ammo of his shotgun, Jai pulled a pistol out of it's holster. He came out from his cover and fired of a clip. Two more grunts went down. Two of the four remaining Elites focused their fire on Jai. Jai ducked back behind his cover as plasma melted away his cover.

He could see Adriana and Mike behind the hallway they had come from. They were firing their rifles taking down another of the Elites, a Grunt, and one Jackal. Mike fired an entire clip at the the Covenant that were left. Two more grunts were down thanks to Mike and Adriana's combined fire.

Having reloaded, Jai came out of his cover and fired a shot at a grunt. Its head exploded violently, splattering the Grunt next to it with blue blood. The other grunt barked wildly and screeched. It ran out of the formation and towards Mike, it's hands up in the air. Mike calmly put it down with a three round burst.

The three remaining Elites looked at each other. They were scared and Jai could feel it; victory was near. Suddenly as Jai was glancing at Adriana he saw a shimmer in the air behind her.

"Adriana behind you!" Jai yelled into the comm. Adriana ducked. Jai fired three shots at the shimmering air and a black armored Elite holding an energy sword materialized. It swung at Adriana who dodged it the blow and tackled the Elite to the ground. Jai didn't have time to continue watching as the other covenant took courage and pressed upon the Spartans.

End  
file.